

SECRETExecutive Registry
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13 Apr 59

THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON

RWD/kre

APR 4 1959

Dear Allen:

The following information is in answer to the inquiry in your letter of March 17, 1959, concerning the status of the Department of Defense's program for critical intelligence communications.

As you are aware, substantial completion of the system cannot be achieved immediately, but is desired by the end of 1961 if possible. A major effort is being applied to developing the communications system for critical intelligence as rapidly as possible. The introduction of improved and systemized handling procedures for critical intelligence traffic transmitted over existing communications facilities has already resulted in some improvement in transmission times. The program for improving communications facilities involves two general areas of development - improvement of existing channels and facilities, and augmentation of existing facilities, mainly through establishment of automatic electronic switching centers at various key relay points throughout the world.

In the first of these areas, a number of improvements are underway, and other improvements will follow. The capability of the system to achieve consistent speeds on the order of 10 minutes, however, is more dependant on the establishment of automatic electronic switching facilities. In this area, involving sophisticated and costly equipment which is not yet completely in being, and a time program through the end of 1961, we are naturally in a more early stage of development. Because of the major investment involved, and the necessity to avoid premature obsolescence of equipment, we have found it necessary to proceed very carefully to ensure that the electronic switching equipment to be obtained for this portion of the military communications system will be compatible with other known or foreseeable future military communications requirements. Steps have been taken to incorporate a substantial portion of the cost of these switching centers in the budget for FY-1960.

OSD REVIEW COMPLETED

THE C.I.A. HAS NO OBJECTION
TO THE DECLASSIFICATION OF
THIS DOCUMENT.

AUTHORITY: HQ 70-2

REVIEWER:

DATE 20/2/81

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In addition to the above, a program is being developed, in consultation with communications representatives of the CIA, for the use of certain of its communications facilities for critical intelligence in areas where military communications facilities are not available or feasible.

I should like to assure you that we are in full agreement with your views as to the importance and urgency of this program, and also to let you know that we appreciate your strong support for pushing forward with the CRITICOMM system.

Sincerely,

Donald A. Draner

Honorable Allen W. Dulles
Chairman
United States Intelligence Board

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MEMORANDUM FOR: General Cabell *CCAS*

A copy of the attached has been sent to
[redacted] for appropriate action.

A copy has also been sent to DD/I. *Jas*

Fmc
FMC *Jas*
8 April 59
(DATE)

FORM NO. 101 REPLACES FORM 10-101
1 AUG 54 WHICH MAY BE USED.

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